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SUBJECT: COLOMBIAN CERD CANDIDATE PASTOR ELIAS MURILLO

REF: BOGOTA 8702

Sensitive but unclassified. Not for internet distribution.

¶1. Post provides the following additional information about Pastor Elias Murillo Martinez, Colombian candidate for the Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

¶2. The Embassy, particularly the Public Affairs Section (PAS), has collaborated with Pastor Murillo on several cultural initiatives. In March, Murillo was instrumental in the organization of a speaker program with U.S. anthropologist Sheila Walker from Spelman College. He has become an excellent resource on Afro-Colombian populations, particularly in Colombia's troubled pacific coast region. In addition, PAS recently asked Murillo to be a part of the selection panel for a USG-funded fellowship program for economically disadvantaged Afro-Colombian university students. The program seeks to expand access to quality higher education overseas while increasing employment opportunities upon graduation. Murillo is a valued interlocutor and Post believes he would be an asset to the work of CERD.

¶3. Post provided general information about Pastor Murillo's work with the Afro-Colombia community and the MFA in reftel. CERD elections will be held on January 14, 2006.

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